

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Sud-Chemie Performance Packaging

#### New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Sud-Chemie Performance Packaging Reduces Set-Up Times, Costs

**Client Profile:**

Sud-Chemie Performance Packaging, located in Belen, New Mexico, is one of four plants worldwide that supplies desiccants (moisture absorbing agents) to several industries, including the pharmaceutical industry. Founded in 1983 as United Desiccants, the plant changed its name to Sud-Chemie Performance Packaging in 1999, and currently employs less than 250 people.

**Situation:**

Sud-Chemie Performance Packaging (Sud-Chemie) packages desiccants in packets and in canisters. The three high-speed machines that produce packets required set-ups between product runs that averaged more than three and one half hours. Each hour of down time on a high-speed packet machine costs Sud-Chemie \$300 in lost capacity. To improve efficiency, the company mandated long product runs, creating larger inventories. Many of the smaller orders had to be processed on smaller, slower, costlier machines. Sud-Chemie wanted to cut costs, and contacted the New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership (New Mexico MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to perform a thorough analysis of the set-up requirements for its high-speed packet machines.

**Solution:**

New Mexico MEP worked with a team of Sud-Chemie employees to analyze the machines' set-up process. First, the team identified the internal (which can only be done when the machine is off) and external (which can be done while the machine is still running) steps in the set-up process. The Sud-Chemie team, with the guidance of New Mexico MEP, found creative ways to make many of the internal steps external, reduce the number of steps in the process, and create point-of-use storage for the tools, materials, and paperwork used in the changeover process. New Mexico MEP also helped schedule and plan the set-ups. Now, approximately one hour before the next set-up, the team reviews its plan to assure a smooth, seamless process.

By boosting teamwork at Sud-Chemie, set-ups now average approximately 45 minutes. In one instance, the set-up process was completed in less than one minute. Before the set-up reduction there were approximately five set-ups per machine each week; now the company has the capability to run smaller lot sizes and reduce carrying costs for inventory.

**Results:**

[www.mep.nist.gov](http://www.mep.nist.gov)



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Significantly reduced set-up time.

Improved capacity.

Created capability to run smaller lot sizes and reduce carrying costs for inventory.

Improved teamwork.

### **Testimonial:**

"I am enthusiastic about the process and the results [of our work with the New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership]. I think there are more gains to be made using the lean approach."

Richard Shelley, Quality Manager and Lean Champion